

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION ARA-14

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S E C R E T MEXICO 09783

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: XA, CU, UR, MPOL

SUBJECT: MEXICAN REACTION TO SOVIET AND CUBAN ROLE IN
AFRICA

REF: A) STATE 148740 B) MEXICO 4602

1. EVENTS IN AFRICA, INCLUDING SOVIET AND CUBAN MILITARY
PRESENCE ON THE CONTINENT, ARE PERIPHERAL TO MEXICO'S
BASIC FOREIGN POLICY INTERESTS. THUS IN ANY DEBATE OR
DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUE THE GOM WOULD LIKELY REFER TO
THEIR TRADITIONAL POLICY OF "NON-INTERVENTION" AND TAKE A
PASSIVE ROLE.

2. DURING SECRETARY VANCE'S VISIT TO MEXICO IN EARLY MAY,
SECRETARY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS ROEL ATTRIBUTED CUBAN
PRESENCE IN AFRICA TO THEIR "BLOOD TRIBUTE TO THE
RUSSIANS". ROEL ALSO NOTED THAT CUBAN PRESENCE IN AFRICA
PROVIDED A TEST FOR THE COMBAT READINESS OF THE CUBAN
ARMY. HE SAID MEXICO HAD NOTHING TO FEAR FROM CUBA,
BECAUSE MEXICO HAD ITS OWN SUCCESSFUL REVOLUTION. BASED
ON HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH CASTRO, ROEL APPARENTLY BELIEVES
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US POLICY AND ATTITUDE PUSHED CUBANS INTO HANDS OF SOVIETS
AND THAT U. S. SHOULD LIFT THE BLOCKADE TO IMPROVE
RELATIONS. HE DISCOUNTS THE VIEW THAT CUBAN PRESENCE IN
AFRICA FULLFILLSCASTRO'S GOAL OF MAKING CUBA A THIRD
WORLD LEADER. BECAUSE ROEL VIEWS CUBAN PRESENCE IN AFRICA
TO BE PRIMARILY A RESPONSE TO SOVIET REQUEST, HE BELIEVES
THEIR PRESENCE WOULD DECREASE WITH A CHANGE IN U. S.

POLICY THAT LESSENS CUBAN DEPENDENCE ON SOVIETS, I. E.,
LIFTING THE BLOCKADE.

3. IT WAS THE U. S. HOPE THAT LOPEZ PORTILLO WOULD DISCUSS
THE QUESTION WITH THE SOVIETS DURING HIS MID-MAY VISIT TO
THE SOVIET UNION. HOWEVER, IT APPEARS THAT HE CHOSE NOT
TO RAISE A CONTENTIOUS ISSUE WITH HIS SOVIET HOSTS,
POSSIBLY FOR FEAR OF FEOPARDIZING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF GOALS
MORE VITAL TO MEXICO, I. E., SOVIET SIGNATURE OF THE
TULATEOLCO TREATY.

4. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT GOM BELIEVES SOVIET AND
CUBAN ROLE IN AFRICA TO BE A POTENTIALLY DIVISIVE ISSUE
AMONG LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES. IF THE ISSUE WERE TO BE
RAISED IN MULTILATERAL FORUM, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT MEXICO
WOULD PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE, AND MIGHT VERY WELL ABSTAIN ON
A VOTE CONDEMNING SOVIET/CUBAN INTERVENTION IN AFRICA.

LUCEY

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